LABOUR MONTHLY

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The Miners: a Re-appraisal

by the President of the Yorkshire Miners,

J. R. A. MACHEN

★

Economic Showdown

by R. Palme Dutt, in Notes of the Month

Other Articles include

NORTH AFRICA SHAKES FRANCE

Desmond Buckle traces the events of this crisis.

LANDLORDS LET LOOSE

Katherine Hood on this next stage of the Rent Act.

THREE WISEACRES ANSWERED

The Cohen Report's arguments annihilated by John Marshall.

INDONESIA: THE WAR PLOT

Jack Woddis, who exposed it, draws the moral.

ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE

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IMPOSING FREEDOM

AN AWE-INSPIRING Principal of a women's college on being asked whether the institution was based on self-government lines, replied: 'Certainly! The students run it democratically. I *insist* upon them doing so.' Mr. Dulles, too, *insists* upon the 'Free World' being defended; that is why American bombers and occupation troops are on 'their' bases in Britain and elsewhere. The 'Free World' is an institution in which some are born free, like Mr. Dulles; some achieve freedom, like the Standard Oil Company; and some are unfortunate enough to have 'freedom' thrust upon them. Very puzzling to a Visitor from Outer Space, not educated up to the Pentagon's global view of the 'Free World'. But he might glean useful glimpses of what it consists in from this number of L.M. He would note that freedom has to be thrust upon the Algerians and Tunisians by torture and bombing planes. He could observe the State Department (which sponsors SEATO to prevent 'subversion' in South East Asia) beaming upon a curiously financed military officers' armed uprising in Indonesia, as the Fleet stands by to protect that lavish oil company whose recent connections were described in the February L.M. He might remark that before freedom could be thrust on Indonesia according to the successful U.S. recipe in Guatemala, it would be necessary first to take away the kind of democracy and independence which they have been acquiring for themselves without Mr. Dulles's permission. He could glance aside at the 600,000,000 Chinese neighbours excluded from the United Nations because the State Department half a world away think their own pensioner Chiang, kicked out nine years ago by his people, occupies the seat more in the best interests of that freedom to which Mr. Dulles was born. He would see what the most long-lived and distinguished Negro scholar has to say about the 'Free World' from his vantage point of a long lifetime at its centre.

Our Space Visitor might even ask: 'Are the British, too, unready for this freedom, except at gun point? Why these processions to occupation bases urging their American defenders to go away. Don't the British *like* the Americans?' Here is a fair offer. If the U.S. Government will restore freedom to the American occupation troops to go home, and restore freedom to Paul Robeson to travel here instead, we will accept the exchange with unbounded enthusiasm. But this great-hearted artist, sixty years old this month, is robbed of his livelihood, and deprived of freedom of movement in Mr. Dulles's 'Free World'. And the peoples are deprived of the freedom of hearing him. Mr. Dulles does not think it in the best interests of the 'Free World' for the people to hear the voice of this grandson of an American Negro slave, who must be far and away the best-loved American in the world. We should have no difficulty in explaining to our Space Visitor which is the true American, and why we prefer Robeson, the fighter for freedom, to Dulles, the imposer of 'freedom'.

Let us hear from some more true Americans. A U.S. reader writes: 'I am of Finnish birth, but have lived in the U.S. nearly all my life. During the years of unemployment I spent some time in the Soviet Union, training young mechanics. Now I am kept very busy indeed trying to eke out an existence on this bleak

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Economic Showdown

WHERE now is the 'New Capitalism'? Once again Fiction has been conquered by Fact. With over ten million unemployed in the major industrial countries of the capitalist world, in addition to the many more millions of unemployed and extension of suffering and shortage among the masses in the non-industrial primary producing countries of still colonial economy, the revisionist rose-colour theories of a marvellous transformation of monopoly capitalism into something new and strange, halfway between capitalism and socialism, have begun to fade. Marxism is perhaps not quite so obsolete as the 'New Thinkers' liked to imagine. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the death of Marx has been fittingly celebrated, not only by the breath-taking advance of the socialist world, but also by an economic situation of the surviving capitalist world which is demonstrating anew the laws of social motion which Marx first laid bare.

Only a year ago such a book as Strachey's *Contemporary Capitalism,* with its would-be refutation of the fallacies of Marxism and presentation of the usual revisionist picture of a 'new capitalism' transformed by social reformism, could still win an audience among a

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section of thoughtful Labour Party readers or trade unionists, impressed by the prolongation of full employment or the partial achievements of the 'welfare state' into the belief that 'perhaps there might be something in it'. If the same work were offered as required reading to a present-day trade unionist, faced with the menace of the sack and the offensive of the Cohen Report, it is likely that his comment might be less polite. Like all its predecessors, the latest version of the Mug's Bible begins to pass into the discard. Study returns perforce to Marx's *Capital*. Not as a dogma, but as the indispensable guide to understanding the present new world situation. For it is a new world situation. It is precisely the understanding of the further development of the basic laws of capitalism and socialism into the present new world situation which is now of primary importance. The old beast of the capitalist jungle is still the same old jungle beast, but now at a far more advanced stage of decay and barbarous horror.

From the Twenties to the Sixties

The older generation will recall how the corresponding Revisionism of the mid-twenties built on the similar illusions springing from the temporary capitalist stabilisation of that era to present the same picture of a new transformed capitalism which had conquered crises and was abolishing poverty (propaganda of the I.L.P. and Labour reformism during those years, combatted at the time in this journal). World development killed those rose-coloured illusions. The Revisionism of the mid-twenties gave place to the grim experience of the thirties, of mass unemployment, of fascism and of world war. To what will the New Revisionism of the fifties lead the world in the fifties and the sixties—if it were allowed to have its way? If the New Revisionism of the gospel of belief in a reformed capitalism were to succeed in paralysing the working class movement in the capitalist world today, then all the horrors of the thirties would be child's play compared to the new horrors which modern capitalism is preparing. The working class and socialist movement awoke too late during the thirties to prevent catastrophe. This time the awakening must come in time before it is too late. All the present initial blows of extending unemployment and insecurity, of the Government's economic offensive, and of the nuclear menace, are a direct aid to that awakening, a warning to shatter naive illusions in the character of capitalist class society, and a trumpet call to the battle, both industrial and political, equally for peace, for the standards of the people and for the advance to socialism, which now opens out.

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A Remarkable Barometer

It is worth recalling, as a symptom of this development, that also in the mid-twenties Strachey reflected the illusions of that era in his early work *Revolution by Reason*, and as Editor of the I.L.P. *Socialist Review* conducted over successive issues a sustained argument against the present writer's *Socialism and the Living Wage* (1927), which had sought to present a Marxist view of the newer developments of monopoly capitalism, rationalisation, Fordism, the 'American economic miracle' and Britain's post-war crisis, as against the then current capitalist and reformist propaganda. During the thirties, when facts demonstrated the correctness of the Marxist thesis, Strachey to his credit corrected his former viewpoint, participated in the struggle against fascism, and declared his support of Marxism. But what has happened in the modern period, in the period of the deepening of the crisis of capitalism, of the extension of socialism over the world, of the cold war of the Western capitalist powers against socialism? Strachey has not merely moved back to the revisionist estimate of the philanthropic transformation of the monopoly capitalist tiger by social reform.

Revisionism and the Cold War

As the necessary accompaniment of this, he has simultaneously moved over to the advocacy of the cold war of the Western capitalist powers against the 'menace of communism'. He has moved over to personal participation—or rather, to symbolic participation, complete with uniform and rifle, for photographic purposes—in the colonial wars of imperialism against the national liberation movement. And in his latest speech in the House of Commons he has moved over to the advocacy of the use of 'tactical' nuclear weapons (that is, atomic weapons more powerful than the atom bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) for a 'limited nuclear war' —in unity with the extreme right wing, with the Browns and Shinwells, at the very moment when the main body of the labour movement is moving over to increasing opposition to the whole conception of nuclear warfare. This evolution is a significant symptom of the present stage of development of capitalism, and of the apologists of capitalism.

Old and New Features

The present never reproduces the past. To seek to discern in the present developments of capitalist economic disorganisation the mechanical reproduction of the world economic crisis of the early

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thirties would be to leave out of account the new features of the world situation, in the world of extending socialism, in the world of the cold war of capitalism, in the world of vast new productive powers with the advance towards the nuclear age. It is true that the present downward economic turn in the capitalist world bears the familiar hallmarks of the onset of the 'normal' cyclical economic crisis of the capitalist trade cycle. Whereas the previous downward movements during the past twelve years bore the peculiar character that they were concentrated in certain industries, while others advanced, or in certain major capitalist countries (Britain in 1947, U.S.A. in 1949-50 or 1953-54) at the same time as others went forward, now the downward turn, the stagnation of production and growth of unemployment have developed simultaneously in all the major capitalist countries, alongside the parallel profound crisis of all the under-developed primary producing countries. The trade deficit of the Asian non-industrialised countries has trebled between 1955 and 1957, while food production is 'lower per head of population than before the war' (Report of United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, March, 1958). All this reflects, not only the further absolute impoverishment of the majority of the capitalist world, but the classic features of the development of world economic crisis of the capitalist system.

Anarchy of Cold War Economy

But all these features have developed within the peculiar conditions of the new world situation since the war, within a capitalism increasingly restricted by the advance of socialism and national liberation, and within the cold war distortion of capitalist economy, reflected in the continuously mounting inflation in all the capitalist countries throughout these years. This inflation has been falsely diagnosed by the capitalist rulers, not as the consequence of their own cold war policies, misuse of the resources of increased production for purposes of destruction and reckless expansion of monopoly profits, but as the consequence of supposed excessive consumption by the masses through higher wages and social services outstripping the advance of production. The falsity of this diagnosis had to be admitted even by the Cohen Report, whose purpose was to produce sophistical arguments and distorted figures to sustain the spurious theory, when that Report had to admit that, even on the basis of these official figures, between 1948 and 1956 production per worker increased by 19½ per cent, while real weekly earnings increased by 17½ per cent or less than the increase in production (real hourly

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earnings by 15¼ per cent, and real wage rates by 11½ per cent). On the basis of this false diagnosis the capitalist rulers have proceeded, not to change their own cold war policies and waste of resources, but to apply the classic remedies of deflation for cutting mass consumption and restricting production by raising interest rates, slashing social expenditure, promoting unemployment and demanding a wage freeze irrespective of rising prices. When in the midst of this process, and in part because of these measures, the spectre of a slump raises its head, an alternative school clamorously demands a reversal of the engines to return to a so-called expansionist policy.

Inflation-Deflation-Reflation Switchback

While the ancient hacks of the Cohen Committee, appointed in the preceding period, faithfully do their homework, close their blinkered eyes to all the realities of the cold war economy, blame the workers and 'prove' the case for deflation through promoting unemployment and the offensive on the standards of the workers and mass consumption, Government Ministers have already begun to throw out hints, at the very moment when the Report appeared, of the possible necessity to change the course again and combine the offensive on the workers' standards with a return to an expansionist policy, also at the expense of the workers' standards. The change of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was already interpreted by the *Financial Times* (7.1.58) as likely to lead to a switch to a 'more expansionist' policy. In the parliamentary debate on unemployment on February 24, Sir David Eccles, for the Government, indicated that it might become necessary to 'practice reflation . . . in case the American recession turned into a slump'; while the Minister of Labour, Iain Macleod, hinted at the possible necessity 'to relax the policies on which we have embarked'. The grand battle between the champions of 'deflation' and of 'reflation' has proceeded in varying forms in the United States and in Britain and in all the capitalist countries. This crazy switchback not only brilliantly illustrates how the myth of the new 'controlled' or 'managed' capitalism works out in practice. It also demonstrates how the present economic disorganisation of the capitalist world needs to be measured, not simply in terms of the classic operation of the old trade cycle, but against the background of the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism.

Deepening General Crisis

The general crisis of capitalism has developed continuously through successive stages over the past four decades, from that

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point when the increasing contradiction between the advance of the productive forces and the fetters of capitalist property relations had not only led to the stage of imperialist decay, of retardation of the advance of production, but to the explosion of the first world war and the opening of the world socialist revolution. From that point the 'normal' development of capitalism has given place to new conditions. Capitalism was able, with the aid of Social Democracy in Western Europe, to restrict the advance of the socialist revolution temporarily to one-sixth of the world. But the attempt to return to 'normalcy' of the old pre-war capitalism through the temporary and unstable stabilisation of the twenties, on the basis of American credits to restore the gold standard, ended in catastrophe. Its outcome found expression in the record world economic crisis of the early thirties, the desperate expedients of fascism, the advance of aggression and the arms race, culminating in the second world war. The second world war resulted in the extension of the socialist revolution to one-third of the world and the victory of national liberation over four-fifths of the former colonial lands. The restricted capitalist world after the second world war moved over to the system of the cold war, alike as its strategy against the advance of socialism and national liberation, and as the new governing character of its increasingly unstable economic structure during the past twelve years. The temporary partial stabilisation of the fifties was even more unstable and rent with contradictions than the temporary stabilisation of the later twenties, and its outcome now threatens even more menacing explosions.

War and Full Employment

From the world economic crisis of the early thirties the attempted 'normal' functioning of capitalism has never recovered, as the capitalist world has moved over to chronic war or cold war conditions. The first proclamation of the supposed triumph of 'full employment' under capitalism (in answer to the previous real victory of full employment through socialism, in the midst of the mass unemployment of the entire capitalist world) was made by Hitler on the basis of a reckless arms programme whose mounting gamble could only culminate in war. The long mass unemployment in Britain since the winter of 1920, never falling below one million, and rising at times to two and three millions, with derelict industries and sinking agriculture, was ended, not by the Labour Government, but by the second world war. For Britain the second world war passed straight into the cold war (not so cold in Britain's

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numerous colonial wars during the past twelve years), reckless arms expenditure on a scale unparalleled in peace-time, a feverish boom, soaring profits, full employment and mounting inflation, with wages ceaselessly chasing the rise in prices. In the United States the mass unemployment opening with the world economic crisis was only ended, not by the New Deal, but by war. The information that the present official figure of over five million unemployed in the United States is the highest since Pearl Harbour sixteen and a quarter years ago is a reminder of what the figure of mass unemployment was, despite all the alleviations of the New Deal, until war came to the rescue.

Korean War and Rearmament

When the main depression during these twelve years until now threatened the U.S. economy in 1949-50, with 4·7 million unemployed, it was the Korean War that came 'providentially' to the rescue. 'Providence' in this case was possibly assisted by the remarkable coincidence of the presence of the U.S. Chief of Staff, Minister of Defence, Secretary Dulles and other Top Brass on the spot a week before President Rhee's 'March to the North' opened hostilities,* while the unawareness of the socialist world of this impending aggression was revealed by the fact that the Soviet representative was not even present at the United Nations Security Council which illegally endorsed the imperialist aggression of the United States and its satellites to invade Korea. The gigantic rearmament programmes which followed, and which were also imposed on the American satellites, gave a new upward impetus, with consequent extending reflex effects in capital investment and the consumer industries.

And Indonesia?

What reckless new adventure may now be attempted by the desperate American militarists and monopolists, who so stubbornly oppose all proposals for disarmament and counter every Soviet unilateral reduction of arms expenditure with a new increase, as their supposed 'cure' for the present still greater depression? Let us hope that they will not attempt to make Indonesia a new Korea. Dulles has already announced that he is 'considering' according belligerent status to the organisers of the counter-revolutionary

*Conference of Dulles, General Bradley, General MacArthur and Defence Secretary Johnson in Tokyo, mid-June, 1950; Dulles in Seoul, June 17, 1950; Rhee's offensive and the opening of hostilities, June 25, 1950.

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rebellion against the constitutional, elected Government. Such adventures will be less easy in the present world situation, and especially in the present Asian situation, as the proceedings of the Manila meeting of SEATO revealed. But it is assuredly more necessary than ever to be on guard at the present crucial moment, and not to separate the economic situation from the military situation.

Instability of Cold War Economy

Does this mean that the experience of the forties and the fifties has demonstrated that since the open bankruptcy of the world economic crisis of over a quarter of a century ago only war and ever enlarging preparation for war has been able to provide a 'solution' for the deep crisis of the present stage of monopoly capitalism? Such a conception would be as illusory as the parallel naive conception of the reformists that the capitalist tiger could turn into a philanthropist and dispose of its surplus to ameliorate the conditions of the masses of the people. Neither conception offers a 'solution' for the deepening contradictions of modern monopoly capitalism in face of the accelerating advance of productive power and technique, and the parallel accelerating advance of socialism, which can alone use the increase of productive power to raise continuously and at an increasing pace the social and cultural standards of the people on a scale which has never before been known in history. The cold war economy is a distorted economy. It raises new problems and new burdens on top of the profound contradictions of 'normal' capitalism. Mounting inflation is only one symptom of this. The present economic deterioration is a further demonstration of the instability of this cold war economy.

War Psychology

The special menace of the present situation does not arise from the fact that renewed war or further increases in arms expenditure could provide a 'solution', however deadly, for the problems with which the capitalists find themselves confronted. The peculiar menace is that so many of the present most powerful leaders of capitalism, including President Eisenhower and his economic advisers, to judge from his latest statements on the economic situation (and, for that matter, also the most powerful American Labour leaders, to judge from the letter of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. to President

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Eisenhower calling for increased arms expenditure to fight the slump), have begun to think in these terms. Confronted with the manifest contradictions in the economic functioning of modern monopoly capitalism, and with the new demonstrated economic superiority of advance of socialism (a twenty-fold advance in production during the past quarter of a century against a doubling in the United States) to the visible prospect of socialism finally outstripping capitalism in all spheres in the near future, *if peace is maintained,* they begin to think increasingly in terms of war as the only solution, and to judge every proposition from the strategic standpoint of future war.

Path to Nuclear Suicide

For the short-term solution to the economic crisis they turn immediately to increased arms expenditure. President Eisenhower announces an increase of five billion dollars in arms expenditure (or more than the total of the present gigantic British arms budget), not just as a measure of 'defence', but specifically in his address on the economic situation as the main and largest new expenditure proposed to stimulate the economy. Congress, a moment before howling for economy, now howls for the lifting of all limits on arms expenditure. President Meany of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. presents a letter to President Eisenhower calling for increased arms expenditure to fight the slump—that is, for the production of nuclear weapons to massacre and maim tens of millions of human beings in order to provide temporary employment for a section of American workers as an alternative to ending capitalism. Could there be a more horrible expression of the outlook of reformism? Hansen Baldwin, military correspondent of the *New York Times,* reports that, in face of the advancing technological, economic and strategic superiority of the socialist world, the call for a 'preventive war' is gaining increased currency in certain American ruling circles. Such is the death-wish of modern monopoly capitalism.

Blindness and Sight

All this drive to intensified war preparations, and even in some cases to eventual war, as the supposed line of 'solution' of the problems of capitalism is taking place today, no longer in terms of the old conceptions of war, even of the old 'total war' of fascism, but in terms of nuclear weapons and nuclear war. This is the grave new fact of the modern world situation. 'Death Before Surrender'

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has been the familiar ultimatum of every dying social order before the process of historic change to a new social order; and similar slogans have become fashionable in reactionary circles today. But this was before the age of the hydrogen bomb and the rocket missile. It is this that has brought a new factor in the world situation. Had the change-over of the major countries to socialism taken place when it was historically due, after the first world war, and had it not been prevented by Social Democracy reflecting the political immaturity and division of the working class in the Western imperialist countries, the advent of the nuclear age would have meant only the leap forward of socialist humanity to limitless abundance and new mastery of nature and life. But the survival of the obsolete overblown contradiction-ridden and explosive system of world imperialism into the nuclear age—this has brought a new element of menace without previous parallel in human history. It has brought a qualitatively new element of menace into the otherwise familiar explosive powder-keg which has been the continuous picture of the modern imperialist world. The statesmen of imperialism, sunk in their customary narrow, petty, grasping politics of imperialism, and seeing only 'another weapon' or a 'modern unconventional weapon', have so far failed to recognise the significance of this new menace as a new issue transcending the difference of social systems.

Towards Nuclear War?

Through all the prolonged interchanges between the Western powers and the Soviet Union over a Summit Conference, disarmament and peaceful co-existence, the successive arguments and grounds of objection presented by the Western powers to reject every successive proposal have ceaselessly varied and even contradicted one another. But one factor has remained constant through all the successive arguments: the obstinate refusal to agree to the banning of nuclear weapons, and the insistence on maintaining the chosen nuclear strategy as essential. The British Air Minister, Lord Londonderry, used to boast that he had the devil of a business at the Disarmament Conference at Geneva during the thirties to prevent the banning of the favoured British strategy of bombing from the air. But this was child's play compared to the toughness of the present Anglo-American battle to prevent the banning of nuclear weapons. The conclusion from this is inescapable. Whatever the intentions and self-justifications of the promoters, this situation leads to the ceaseless and ever present menace of nuclear war.

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The Battle for Life

In this sense modern monopoly capitalism is in fact driving to nuclear war. This is the grim final outcome to which the contradictions of modern monopoly capitalism are at present leading. Ever wider sections of humanity are awakening to combat this menace. But it is the weakness of 'pure and simple' pacifism in this situation to see the nuclear menace abstractly in terms of rival nuclear 'Great Powers', instead of in the living context of the real economic-political situation which engenders the menace. For in reality the menace of nuclear war cannot be divorced from the present economic situation. The fight against nuclear weapons is necessarily the fight against those most powerful, aggressive, reactionary ruling forces of modern monopoly capitalism which openly proclaim the aims of nuclear strategy and resist every demand to ban nuclear weapons. Only the united strength of the working class, of all supporters of peace and of all progressive people in the non-socialist world, acting in unity with the socialist world against this menace of nuclear war, can wrest the nuclear weapons from the hands of the leaders of monopoly capitalism and prevent this outcome. That is why the battle to banish the menace of nuclear war is the heart of the modern world situation. Victory over the menace of nuclear war can open the door for the advance of humanity to new horizons to accomplish those deeper social changes which the whole present situation is demonstrating as more than ever imperative.

Commune Day, March 18, 1958. R.P.D.

LABOUR MONTHLY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

AFTER THE NAZIS SEIZED POWER

A critical situation faces the world working class. By the events in Germany the heaviest blow of the capitalist reaction since the war has been struck.

If this offensive succeeds without resistance, it will be rapidly followed, not only by intensified reaction in every country, but by the supreme offensive of world capitalism against the final fortress of the working class, against the Soviet Union. *Every force of united working class resistance is now needed in every country to drive back the offensive of capitalist reaction.* . . . The biggest battles, the decisive fight against fascism lies in **front.**

From *Notes of the Month* by R.P.D., April, 1933

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THE ROCKETS

THEIRS is no voyage of discovery
Star-bound
Like a child's dream.

They bring no hope of recovery
To men aground
In a wild sea.

They cast no glittering bouquet
Turning carnival night
Into day.

These rockets plague air and earth,
Steal life
And deny birth.

PETER TEMPEST.

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THE MINERS: A RE-APPRAISAL

J. R. A. Machen
President of the Yorkshire Miners

IT is a tribute to the power and application of the trade union and labour movement that it has taken the Tories nearly seven years of constant endeavour to end full employment.

Ever since they got back to power in 1951, the need for at least a million unemployed has been emphasised by the reactionaries as a means of disciplining the workers, and consequently to keep a high rate of profit.

Here we are now in March, 1958, and just as the chill arctic winds of the early days of the month froze up activity, so the economic policy of this reactionary Government is freezing up the industrial activity of the country. Unemployment figures in Britain are 425,000 and in America for similar reasons have now reached 5,173,000. It is one thing to stop capitalist industry with this ham-handed method of the catastrophic raising of the Bank-rate, but as we found out after the first World War, it is quite another job to start the wheels revolving again. Up to 1951 during the six years of the Labour Government, productivity increased annually on an average by about 3 per cent and had this continued national production would have been 15 per cent or £3,000 million higher annually, but since then, although the economy has been stimulated by cheap coal (from £1 to £5 per ton cheaper at the pithead than anywhere else in Europe) the rate of progress has been brought to a standstill and the engines thrown into reverse. The following figures show this:

INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

1947	91·3	
1948	100	+8·7% on 1947
1949	103	+3·0% on 1948
1950	104	+1·0% on 1949
1951	108	+3·7% on 1950
1952	109	+0·9% on 1951
1953	109	+0·0% on 1952
1954	110	+0·9% on 1953
1955	108	−1·9% on 1954
1956	109	+0·9% on 1955
1957	109	+0·0% on 1956

I want to emphasise that the last time we had a 7 per cent bank rate in our country, we in our generation travelled a road that led

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through the tremendous strikes and lock-outs of 1926, to nearly fifteen years of short time and unemployment (sometimes with up to three million workers on the Labour Exchange) and we only emerged from it in the second year of the second World War. In fact in 1937 my predecessor, Herbert Smith, was still distributing old clothes and boots collected by the Lord Mayor of London, to the miners of Yorkshire.

It may be true that history never quite repeats itself but the present situation presents many characteristics which are similar to the bad 'twenties and hungry 'thirties. The Tories, politically powerful, are leading the attack on wage standards, on the social services, and pressing forward with the iniquitous Rent Act in the sacred name of hard money, just as prior to 1926 the Tory cry was that all wages must come down in order that we can return to the Gold Standard. Churchill, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, returned to the Gold Standard in 1925; but the workers of our country were crucified on the Cross of the Gold Standard and they paid in poverty, degradation and want, for their political apathy. The cry now is in principle the same; the attack is upon the living standards of the workers. But there is a very great difference in this present situation and this lies in the strength and power of the Trade Union and Labour Movement. Similarly, as in the nineteen twenties, the coalmining industry promises to become the whipping boy of the reactionary politicians and industrialists. The clouds are gathering and already many of the reactionaries who came over into nationalisation from the old régime, whose philosophy is, and has always been, that the way to success was and is to starve the belly and kick the bottom of the worker, are chortling that the honeymoon period is over.

It is commonly held that the besetting evil of the workers is complacency; *but not so the miners,* and it is ill betide those who may imagine so. When the notices were displayed eleven years ago saying 'This mine is owned by the people' the miners enthusiastically played their part, and production started to rise immediately; and it is worthy of note, that despite inevitable seam deterioration which means a loss of 4 million tons per year, annual output is now 24 million tons higher than 1947, with no real change in manpower. Everybody knows, of course, that under nationalisation a great deal of capital has been spent and work done to improve the efficiency of our industry from the catastrophically low level to which it had sunk under private ownership; but I wish to stress that by far the largest part of the capital already used, to the extent of

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£291 millions, was in the nature of replacement. Only one-tenth of the major reconstruction schemes have been completed, and the improvements expected from this programme will come in the future: in effect they are still in the pipe line. It is estimated that in the next ten years 50 million tons of new capacity will be created but not less than 40 million tons will be merely replacement and only 10 million tons in addition to productive capacity. In these circumstances it reflects great credit indeed upon the mineworkers and technicians of our industry that output has increased in every way in which it can be measured since the industry was nationalised.

Prior to the last World War every European coal country with the exception of Belgium and France, was substantially ahead of us in output per manshift. In 1936, Germany was 42 per cent higher, Holland 49 per cent higher, and Poland 74 per cent higher. Under nationalisation we were the first European country to achieve pre-war output per manshift (1938, 1·14 tons) from the extremely low level in 1945 of ·997 tons overall, to 1·16 tons overall in 1949, and to the highest outputs ever achieved in British mining history of 3·33 tons at coalface and 1·23 tons overall per manshift in 1956. Since then we have continued to outstrip our competitors, and the figures for 1956 bear this out. Output per manshift underground in the European Coal Community is 1·529 kilogrammes (approximately 30 cwt.) as against our 1·602 kilogrammes (approximately 31½ cwt.) in Britain. If we break this down and compare their highest producing areas with our opposite numbers in Britain, the same picture is manifest. Even greater is the disparity in pit head price of coal, and comparative figures issued by the National Coal Board for November, 1957, show the way in which cheap British coal has been making it possible for British industry to compete in the markets of the world.

Prices of Various Coals—November 1957 (Pit Head Prices)

	U.K.	*Ruhr*	*France*	*Belgium*	*Netherlands*
Anthracite (French Nuts)	144/5	180/6	246/3	221/0	216/0
Dry Steam Coals (Large Nuts) ..	126/3	157/3	239/0	217/3	170/9
Coking Coals (Washed Smalls —Durham) ..	99/9	109/9	135/3	131/0*	110/6
Industrial Coal (Large) ..	96/7	118/3	164/6	143/0*	N.A.

*Approximate figures

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These figures underline what has been happening ever since nationalisation. The industry has never been on a commercial basis, *except in N.C.B. arguments when replies were being given to claims by the miners.* This policy of selling coal at preferential prices to industry is now being reviewed and already on March 5, 1958, the N.C.B. issued new prices in regard to industrial coal to take effect from March 17, 1958. *But it should have been done years ago.* In conference after conference the N.U.M. have stressed the need for a price policy which would prevent some of the finest coal in the world being sold at less than the cost of production to the industrialists allowing them to make profits at the expense of the mineworker.

Recently the Joint National Negotiating Committee of the N.U.M. in putting forward its claim for an increase of 10s. per week for certain of its members, was confronted by the N.C.B. with the statement that the accumulated deficit was £23·8 millions plus a possible loss of several millions in 1957. This, of course, is an insult to the intelligence of the mineworkers. It has now become deliberate policy for the Board to carry this deficit as a first defence against the claims of the mineworkers for their charter or necessary wage demands. They will indignantly deny this, but if it were not so, would they have carried on so quietly subsidising imported coal to the tune sometimes of £3 to £4 per ton and a total loss to the industry of £70 million, whilst at the same time importing steel at an added cost from abroad?

The present Chairman of the National Coal Board, Sir James Bowman, emphasised to the Government recently that the industry was being used as a service and the balance sheet should not be used to criticise the National Coal Board. At the same time the N.C.B. use the balance sheet against the interests of our lower paid men who are on the poverty line of £8 10s. 0d. to £9 10s. 0d. per week, and in these circumstances we must be concerned as a union with the obligations and restrictions which are being placed upon the shoulders of the N.C.B. I quote from N.C.B. publication *British Coal, the Rebirth of an Industry* issued in January, 1957:

> During a period of general inflation, of rising costs and of heavy capital expenditure, British coal has been and remains today, the cheapest in Western Europe. . . . *As a matter of national policy, selling prices have sometimes been held down to the point of incurring a loss.* The total deficit of about £37 million (this was brought down to £23·8 in 1956) which the Board accumulated in the first nine years to 1955 is in fact more than accounted for by the losses of two years only—£23 million in 1947 and £20 million in 1955—when increased production costs (and in the latter

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year, losses on imported coal) could not immediately be covered by increased prices. (page 13)

The National Coal Board's accounts are drawn up in commercial style. Yet unlike almost any other trading enterprise, its 'dividend' is deducted before profits or losses are computed. The industry's ten year operating profit—before paying interest to the Treasury—was well over £100 million. (page 14)

In a word the miners are still buying the industry for the nation. It was to have cost us £165 million, already we have paid the Treasury a sum of £186 million in interest payments, and in accordance with the sacred principles of usury we still have to keep paying.

We miners can afford no longer to stand on one side and see the mining industry made the milch cow for the rest of industry.

Exports—and contraction of the industry

It is obvious from the figures I have already quoted of the price of coal in the rest of Europe, and the pressing need for coal on the European market during the last ten years, that our nationalised coal industry could have reaped a rich harvest simply by selling a proportion of its coal abroad. Exports were kept down to the lowest level by Government policy; those who needed coal had to look elsewhere. They looked mainly to the U.S.A. who now has established long-term contracts and is pouring coal into Europe at an annual rate of about 37 million tons. They have been helped in this penetration of the European market by the slashing of freight rates which took place in the middle of 1957; and the ban on exports of coal (except the most vital) which had been operating till recently in our country. Now, it will not be so easy to take the 'slack' or very small coal which is surplus to our requirements, and sell it profitably abroad. In fact, exports of coal in the first nine weeks of 1958 are only 968,000 tons as against 1,540,000 in the same period of 1957. We have missed the boat, we ought to have seen to it that the results of the coal industry were not only profitable to the nation as a whole, but also to our mining industry.

Now in this atmosphere of the contraction of industry deliberately brought about by the policy of the Tory Government, we have the spectacle of two past trade union leaders egged on by accountants and timeservers, getting tough with the miners, on the ground that the Coal Board is in the 'red'. I wish to emphasise that the whole of the leadership of the N.U.M. is unanimous in affirming that reference to balance sheets like these shall not frustrate the just claims and aspirations of the mineworkers.

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It is all the more abominable that this toughness should be shown on the very reasonable application the N.U.M. has made for 10s. per week for the lower paid men, an amount only just sufficient to meet the rising cost of living. Furthermore it should be known that recently I had the disgusting experience of hearing the Labour Member of the N.C.B., Mr. J. Crawford, repudiating the Miners' Charter, which it was agreed by Mr. E. Shinwell, Minister of Mines in the 1945 Labour Government, *in writing*, should be implemented in accordance with a timetable and progressive plan. Here we are eleven years after, still seeking the implementation of the 40-hour week for surface workers, and being upbraided by Mr. Crawford before the National Reference Tribunal for 'glibly' (so he said) bringing this claim before the National Reference Tribunal.

Accidents and Disease

The miners have always been loyal to the principles of nationalisation and worked for its success, sometimes to their own detriment. For instance, why else have we stomached a situation where the workers of every other nationalised industry have 13 weeks full pay when off sick (and more than a million workers in Government service and in the privately-owned sector, too) whilst in the nationalised mining industry the only workers who are *not* covered by a sickness scheme are our members. I hasten to add that we all appreciate the progress which has been made in the last ten years, during the period of nationalisation, but we should be fools to think that the N.C.B. has been solely responsible for this, or indeed the fact that our industry was nationalised. In the period of full employment many of the benefits which we have won have also been gained in the private sector. Indeed, looking across the North Sea to Germany, we see the miners and other manual workers there, already in July, 1957, guaranteed by statute 90 per cent of their average wages during sickness! In every mining industry on the face of the earth, recognition has had to be given to the fact that the work is dirty, difficult and dangerous, and wherever full employment is apparent, rewards for entering the mining industry have had to be increased. Recent explosions, and large-scale accidents which have killed and injured scores of our members, when reported in the press serve to remind the public of the danger of the miners' calling. We are worried about this, but in the period of nationalisation a great deal of work has been done to make the pits safer and healthier. The fatality rate has been brought down from 858 in 1938 with 781,700 men employed or 1·097 per thousand

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employed, to 391 in 1957 with 710,000 men employed, or ·551 per thousand employed. The rate of serious accidents has also been reduced, but there is no room for complacency. The number of accidents which resulted in incapacity for at least three days was 220,000 in 1956, and the provisional figure of 199,000 in 1957, but the actual number of accidents reported at the pits is well over *one million* per year. Further, the scourge of pneumoconiosis continues to be responsible for the death of 800 miners every year and in 1956, 4,853 new cases were certified to be suffering from this dust disease.

Labour Relations

In 1958 it is apparent to every miner that we are entering a new phase of relationships in our industry. I have been on the National Executive Committee since 1944, and I have experienced meetings over the years with Lord Hyndley and his Board, with Sir Hubert Houldsworth and his team; but the ham-handedness of the present team and the 'frigidity' of relationship reminds me of the 'old régime' pre-nationalisation. There is no wonder that output is declining, the miners feel the change in the climate. They feel that with the growing stocks of coal at the pitheads, the 'starve the belly and kick the bottom' gentry who only whispered during the period of scarcity of coal, are now starting to be the dominant influence. Consumption of coal also continues to decline. Estimates made on the basis of a continually expanding economy are proved false. Consumption of coal which was rising at the rate of three million tons per year up to 1957 suddenly took a dive and in that year consumption of coal was down by two million tons. On the week ending December 28, 1957, stocks of coal distributed and undistributed stood at 27,648,000 tons.* Nearly 9 million tons of this was at the opencast sites and slowly accumulating 'mountains of mourn' at the pitheads. The cost of stocking this coal, wastage involved, and work of picking it up again is, according to reliable estimate, in the region of £1 per ton, and this is bound to make a complete muck-up of the financial results in 1958.

Further, the N.C.B., after frantically exploring every avenue for manpower, have now suddenly, and without consultation with the National Union of Mineworkers, stopped recruitment. This complete face-about was made almost hysterically, and in some big

*Even now after the hard weather and a drop of 10,000,000 tons in the first ten weeks of 1958, stocks still stand at 23,991,000 tons.

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pits men are being fetched from the coalface to do datal work; and this, in my opinion, is the road to nowhere. In these circumstances we should end Saturday working, whether the N.C.B. wish to renew the agreement or not; and we should go further and stop all overtime (except for safety reasons) which has become rife in our industry. Further, we should stop tearing the countryside to pieces with open-cast mining which we have always looked upon as a stop-gap operation; whose cessation, like its starting, is a matter of less consequence than the opening or closing of a pit.

At the same time, I realise that the lower paid men cannot enjoy a reasonable standard of life on the minimum rates of £8 10s. 0d. on the surface and £9 10s. 0d. per week underground. These are poverty rates, and we must intensify our efforts to secure the improvement of them at the earliest possible moment. Further, now that the country is not gasping for coal, with coal stocks of unprecedented size, the last real argument has gone against the return to the seven-hour day (plus one winding time) for underground workers and the 40-hour week for surface workers.

The Seven-Hour Day

It should be understood by our fellow citizens that we miners were promised a six-hour day by Lord Sankey's Commission in 1919 and the seven-hour day plus one winding time was taken away at the point of the gun by the old coal owners in 1926. Surface men's daily hours actually increased for certain men during 1947 and it is high time for the 40-hour week for surface men to be brought fully into operation. Our case for the 40-hour week for surface workers and payment of wages during sickness has been placed before the Morris Tribunal, on February 24 and 25, 1958.

What the National Reference Tribunal will recommend regarding our claims for sick pay and for the 40-hour week for surface workers nobody can estimate, although it is obvious the political pressure is hostile. Whatever they do, there remains a vital need for loyalty to our national union and for the utmost vigilance for all concerned in its leadership. The task of the N.U.M. is to safeguard the standards of the mineworkers who are undertaking this arduous job for the nation and to engage all the power we can command to bring our Charter of Improvement into reality in the shortest possible time.

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THREE WISEACRES ANSWERED

John Marshall

'AN impartial report by three very distinguished men' says the Government of the Cohen Council's report. That may be, but as the Irishman very sensibly asked: whose side are you neutral on? The entire trade union movement has rightly attacked this report for its wholesale endorsing of the views of the Government and the employers as well as for the extremely reactionary views it puts forward on its own account. Besides being a class manifesto however, the report is also full of figures which will be used by the propaganda organs of the employers (including the Treasury information office) and it is these which we shall examine here.

The main conclusions of the report can be summarised as follows. In 1946 all the goods and services available in this country were worth £11½ billion,* in 1956 £24½ billion; of the £13 billion increase £4 billion was for a larger quantity and £9 billion was for increased prices. The price increase was 'attributable as to 49 per cent to extra wages' (p. 50, § 5). This conclusion is also emphasised in a table and a diagram. True, this high percentage is mainly due to the fact that wages were bigger than the other factors to start with, but wages, according to the report, did also increase more than profits, measured in various ways and over various years, within this period. Average earnings per worker rose more than production per worker. And the average wage-earner and the average salary earner in manufacturing industry have both had a real gain in their standard of living in recent years, whereas the incomes of other sections have risen less.

As to the reasons for all this, the report concludes that:

> an abnormal pressure of monetary demand for both consumer and capital goods and services . . . has been the main cause of the rising trend of prices and money incomes. (p. 51, §12)

Increases in import prices, say the three wise men, were a contributory factor up to 1951. It is important that the inflation should be stopped. The Government's policy of damping down demand has been quite right, even though it must slow down investment. The rise in unemployment is no reason to stop the credit squeeze:

*Billion is used to mean thousand million.

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> No one should be surprised or shocked if it proves necessary that it should go somewhat further. In our opinion it is impossible that a free and flexible economic system can work efficiently without a perceptible (though emphatically not a catastrophic) margin of unemployment of this kind. (p. 41, §135)

If there were a severe slump in exports, however, 'very difficult questions of policy would undoubtedly arise'. It can be expected, the report goes on, that wage claims will now be pressed less hard, and it is desirable that any wage increases should be less than the rise in the cost of living. Further, wages in industries in which productivity is rising fast should not go up in proportion, otherwise '*average* wages would rise faster than *average* productivity, and the rise in prices would continue' (p. 53, § 29). The recent rise in dividends, however, is not 'open to serious criticism' and profits are needed for investment. It is desirable that prices in the most productive industries should fall, and to achieve this 'main reliance must be placed on the forces of active competition between firms'.

It is difficult to know where to start on all this. In the good cause of raising prejudice against the wage earners the Council have started a number of hares (such as the smaller proportion of company profits now being distributed as dividends) which have nothing to do with the subject. Let us, however, go straight to that 49 per cent of the 1946-56 price increase which is said to be 'attributable' to extra wages. This is grossly misleading.

The supply of goods and services whose price rise is being considered is made up of home production (divided broadly into 'wages' and 'profits') imports and—since it is prices we are considering—the net effect of indirect taxes and subsidies. Of this whole body the 'wages' share of home production formed 49 per cent in 1946, and in 1956, after prices had risen, it still formed 49 per cent. And that is ALL that these distinguished gentlemen are saying. The causal relation which is implied in the word 'attributable' they do not attempt to argue and indeed it would be contrary to the theory they do put forward. They go on to say that wages rose faster than profits and we shall come back to that point, but the implication of the following table* (which does not purport to show causes but only facts) is that 'profits' defended themselves less well than 'wages' against rising import prices.

*The table is not printed in the Council's report; it is table 17 of the 1957 National Income Blue Book, with the figures for 1946 added by the writer of this article. It appears to correspond to the 'total sum paid out for home-produced goods, services and imports' about which the Council was arguing (p. 9). The meaning of 'income from employment' and 'profits, etc.', is discussed below.

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TOTAL SUPPLIES

	1946		1948		1956	
	£ million	Per cent	£ million	Per cent	£ million	Per cent
Income from employment	5,732	49	6,766	49	12,222	49
Profits etc.,	3,011	26	3,434	25	5,813	24
Imports	1,668	14	2,197	16	4,268	17
Net taxes on expenditure	1,164	10	1,450	10	2,453	10
Residual error	—	—	−19	—	−96	—
	11,575	100	13,828	100	24,660	100

Now for what happened to wages and profits. Between 1946 and 1956 wages and salaries did rise faster than profits, whatever definition of profits we choose. This implies nothing whatever about prices and is certainly nothing for the trade union movement to be ashamed of. But from 1948 onwards it makes a lot of difference what definitions of wages and profits are chosen and here the Council has been as partial as necessary. In the section on Gains and Losses the report compares, for the period 1948-56, 'wages and salaries' with 'net profit income', 'net company profits', 'net rent':

	Per cent increase 1948-56
Wages and salaries	81
Net profit income	64
Net company profits	76
Net rent	21

Now in the first place 'wages and salaries' includes Forces pay, employers' National Insurance contributions and employers' contributions to pension funds, etc. (among these presumably, pensions for salaried directors). Whether these additions are, or are not 'wages and salaries' by far the greater part of them are not negotiated and there is nothing the unions can do about them. In the second place 'net profit income' includes income of the self-employed, rent, etc., and it is argued that as some small businesses have been floated as companies during the period the increase in company profits alone would be misleadingly large.

This is true; but the point is, how big a factor is it? It certainly distorts the picture more to bring in the doctor and the corner shopkeeper, whose incomes have admittedly fallen in relation to those of other sections but who have very little to do with the struggle between wages and profits. For this purpose what

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matters most is true wages and salaries on the one hand, and profits of companies and nationalised industries on the other, and this is the one figure the report does not give us. True wages and salaries rose 79 per cent between 1948 and 1956, gross profits of companies and 'public corporations' (*i.e.*, nationalised industries) 74 per cent—a small enough gap to make all this fuss about—and net profits (which is the measure the Council prefers) of the same sections 84 per cent, *or more than wages.** How came it that in all the tables this one was left out?

All these are relatively minor objections however. The real point is that having made its analysis of 'an abnormal pressure of monetary demand' the Council now spends the rest of its report arguing about increased *costs*—and mainly wage costs. Surely it should have concentrated on the question: where did the increased demand come from? That volume of supplies whose price rose £9 billion filled a demand by consumers, Government and so on, and it is *this* side of the picture which, logically, the Council should have looked at. It is as follows:

TOTAL DEMAND†

	1946		*1948*		*1956*	
	£ million	*Per cent*	*£ million*	*Per cent*	*£ million*	*Per cent*
Consumer expenditure	7,159	62	8,471	61	13,409	54
Government expenditure	2,291	20	1,761	13	3,498	14
Investment	874	7	1,605	12	3,389	14
Exports	1.251	11	1,991	14	4,364	18
	11,575	100	13,828	100	24,660	100

The increased demand came *not* from consumer expenditure, which fell quite sharply as a proportion of the whole, but mainly from investment and exports. It is the capitalists, investing to cheapen their labour costs, and the financiers who are pushing up exports in order to rebuild foreign investments, who have provided the extra demand and any honest analysis would have said so. Government expenditure in 1946 was still almost on the stupendous

*'Net' here means not after tax but after what the National Income statisticians call 'capital consumption' or an estimate of what ought to be put aside for depreciation at current prices. If 'net rent' bore any relation to what the landlords got, there would be no slum houses.

†From Tables 1 and 7 of the National Income Blue Book *Government Expenditure* is public authorities' current expenditure on goods and services: 'Investment' is gross fixed capital formation plus the value of the physical increase in stocks; 'Exports' is exports and re-exports of merchandise and of other goods and services.

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level of war-time; since 1948 military expenditure has risen from £740 million to £1,629 million: 5 to 7 per cent of total demand.

The Council's remedy is consistent with its analysis: *i.e.*, demand should be damped down; the three wiseacres admit that this will mean a slowing down of investment, express no views on the arms programme (which even Thorneycroft knew was a cause of inflation) and are clearly mainly concerned about damping down the demand for labour. For they are not bothered either by the immorality of creating unemployment or by the dynamics of a recession which has once started. The report has by no means had a wholehearted welcome even from businessmen, who are well aware that slowing investment puts up costs, and are also nervous about a slump.*

Where does the Labour Party stand? Gaitskell and Wilson have rightly pointed out that if production were allowed to rise wage costs per unit of output would fall but their analysis is that it is *costs* which have pushed up prices (not extra demand which has pulled them) and that this means chiefly wages; it is:

> a cost inflation; in other words, the wage-price price-wage spiral with which we are all so familiar. (Gaitskell, *Hansard*, January 23, 1958.)

The remedy? Increased production and wage restraint. This is better than the creation of unemployment as a policy, but it means that we are to give up the attempt to increase wages at the expense of profits: exploitation for ever. It is also based on two fallacies; one that employers fix prices in relation to costs and not to what the market will bear,† and two, that planning can make capitalism produce for use.

The motor of capitalism is profit; it has in the past been quite a powerful motor, as Mr. G. Schwartz's weekly sermon points out. But one of the moving parts of that motor is the class struggle: wage claims—automation—higher production. Mr. Gaitskell has not yet thought up an alternative to that. And the motor breaks down badly at intervals. The trade unions will not be either frightened or persuaded out of trying, as always, to raise their members' living standards. But they are also being faced with the fact that inflation, deflation and Gaitskell 'planning' (which does not in any case avoid boom and slump and whose first assumption is wage freeze) are all unacceptable. The system needs to be changed.

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*See *e.g.*, *Financial Times*. February 21, 1958.

†For a full discussion of wages, prices and inflation see the article by Ron Bellamy in *Marxism Today*, November 1957.

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INDONESIA: THE WAR PLOT

Jack Woddis

IN February *Labour Monthly* published an article dealing with the crisis that had arisen over the refusal of the Dutch to return West Irian to Indonesia. It was pointed out that behind a spate of the usual propaganda about 'Communist intrigue' a very real plot was being organised, with the help of the U.S. State Department, to stage a revolt in Sumatra to bring about the downfall of the Central Government in Indonesia.

On February 11 the U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, rushed in to declare that the constitutionally established Indonesian Government in Djakarta was 'unconstitutional'; and that the U.S. would like to see in Indonesia a Government 'which reflects the real interests and desires of the people'. Four days later, on February 15, rebels in Sumatra announced the setting up of a new 'government' aimed at the overthrow of the Central Government.

Making the American position even more open, warships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet moved into position off the east coast of Central Sumatra on March 11, claiming to be doing this in order to evacuate American citizens from the island. (The evacuation of nationals is always a convenient excuse for imperialist interference.)

On March 12 the SEATO meeting in Manila held a closed session on Indonesia. On March 13 Dulles announced that the U.S. was considering giving recognition to the rebel 'government'. He added that such a decision 'depended on whether the movement had gained sufficient momentum and stability to have recognition granted'. (It will not be lost on any reader how quick this twentieth century Metternich is to rush in with talk about recognising a spurious 'government' which has only lasted a few weeks and has obviously no popular support; while at the same time the U.S. Government consistently refused to recognise the Government of People's China, which has nearly ten years of stability behind it and is clearly backed by the overwhelming majority of the 600 million inhabitants of China.) On March 14, the Indonesian Prime Minister, Djuanda, confirmed the report that American arms had been dropped to rebel forces by aircraft with Australian markings. Though denying that it was involved, the U.S. Government had to admit, according to Reuter and Associated Press reports on March 14, that 'it did not rule out the possibility . . . that arms and ammu-

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nition declared surplus to U.S. needs could have been picked up on the open market'. They can tell that one to the marines!

This brief diary is a confirmation of the plot organised by the American rulers to overthrow the democratic government of the Indonesian Republic; and, in view of the open use being made of Singapore by the rebels, the British Government is implicated.

The Western Powers hope that by playing on certain local feeling in Sumatra and making use of a handful of discredited officers, religious fanatics, corrupt bankers and other social misfits, they can bring pressure to bear on the Indonesian Government; secure the installation of their pet Hatta as Prime Minister; divide the national forces by means of anti-communist baiting and repression; and so weaken the Republic and make possible the continued exploitation of Indonesian wealth by Western monopolies. Sumatra has been chosen as the base for this attempt because of its immense natural wealth, including oil, its strategic proximity to Singapore, its sparse population (under ten million compared with sixty million in Java), and its relatively less advanced political movement.

So far the plot has largely misfired. The Indonesian people, instead of being thrown into confusion by the revolt, have stood firm; and the Government has taken commendably quick and decisive steps to crush the revolt, instead of doing what the imperialists had hoped—carry on protracted negotiations with the rebels. Hatta's attempt to push President Sukarno off his anti-imperialist path has failed. He has not yet openly committed himself to the rebel government, obviously preferring to bide his time.

The military successes already scored by the Indonesian Central Government and the firmness of its stand are a good omen. But the struggle is not yet over, for the rebels do not stand alone. They have powerful backers in the West. *The Times* on March 15 even went so far as to offer them advice:

> The rebels' main advantage lies in the money they have amassed by trading with and through Singapore. . . . If the struggle develops into an economic test of endurance, which in some ways might be the best strategy for the rebels, the focus would shift to the Strait of Malacca, where the shipping connection with Singapore constitutes Central Sumatra's lifeline.

(Incidentally, the practices of the 'main advantage' referred to are illegal; and were already being practised even before the rebel 'government' had been set up.)

But if the rebels have allies, the allies of the Indonesian people are far stronger. And it would be as well if Dulles and all those who think like him were to remember this.

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LANDLORDS LET LOOSE

Katherine Hood

BY April 6 most of the tenants to be evicted next October will have received their notices to quit. Public indignation is mounting all over the country as the appalling truth dawns that literally thousands—many of them old and sick—may be turned into the street. The Rent Act's chickens are coming home to roost.

April 6 is also the day when the second round of rent increases takes effect for the tenants of houses still controlled. Outrageous as these increases are, the main storm has blown up around the decontrolled tenants. And with reason.

Some 800,000 houses were decontrolled last July, but the tenants were given fifteen months 'temporary protection' which comes to an end on October 6, 1958. During this fifteen months the landlords of these decontrolled dwellings could not raise rents unless they entered into agreements with their tenants to last at least three years. But those landlords who have been prepared to forego a fifteen months' rent increase can now give six months' notice to quit in order to gain possession or impose whatever terms they please. Any illusions that the landlords would behave like Universal Aunts has now been dispelled. 'Why on earth should a property owner be regarded as a criminal if he gets all he can for what he has to sell?' inquires the *Property Owners Journal*. And indeed the landlords have now shown that they are out to 'get all they can'; so much so that even Mr. Henry Brooke, the Minister of Housing, has been forced to utter a feeble warning, loudly complaining that some have dared to use the powers he gave them.

While the Government continues to resist pressure to amend the Act, those newspapers which support the Act have been doing their best to pretend that its effects are not what they appear to be, and have been propagating, among other things, three fallacies.

Fallacy number one is that the vast majority of landlords are behaving 'reasonably' and that all the trouble has been caused by a handful of 'unscrupulous' ones. Yet the facts produced by even the most pro-landlord sources show this fallacy up.

Thus towards the end of February the *Financial Times* drew up what it called the 'London Picture'. In London there are 190,000 decontrolled tenants. Of these 90,000 (or less than half) had

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accepted new three-year agreements from their landlords. Now it is true that among these there are a few landlords who have done no more than fix a new rent ceiling at twice gross value—which means that the tenants have had the same rise as others whose houses have remained controlled. There is nothing at all 'reasonable' about this rent ceiling; it involves a savage cut in living standards for many tenants, and a bonus to landlords who do no repairs. The most that can be said for this handful of landlords is that they have acted with comparative restraint. But for the vast majority of these 90,000, the new agreements provide for rent ceilings at between two and a half to three times gross value, plus—very often—onerous repairing conditions; in other words half as much again as would be allowed if the dwellings were still controlled. Here we see the first fruits of the so-called 'free market'. Within a week of the passing of the Act, word went forth that the 'free market' rent was two and a half to three times gross value, and a new 'fair' rent level is rapidly established with remarkable unanimity. This new 'fair' rent has nothing to do with the cost of building, maintaining, or repairing a house; it was what the property pundits thought the traffic would bear during the period of fifteen months temporary protection, knowing that there was an acute housing shortage, and that the landlords therefore had the whip hand. Such landlords are what Mr. Brooke calls 'reasonable'.

These 90,000 with 'fair' agreements are a minority; what of the other 100,000? According to the *Financial Times* (February 27) by the end of February, 6,000 had been given notice to quit without option; another 30,000 had been offered agreements which they could not accept because they could not afford them; another 64,000 had either been given notice to quit prior to negotiation (*i.e.*, they are in process of being 'softened up') or they had heard nothing—which means that their landlords were not interested in three-year agreements. On many of these the blow may now have fallen—notice to quit, or a new lease to come in next October on impossible terms. This then is the 'London Picture' of 'fair' landlordism. Meanwhile tenants are frantically trying to buy, house prices have hardened, and mortgages are often unobtainable owing to the credit squeeze.

Fallacy number two is that it is the 'small' landlords who are causing the trouble; the 'big' landlords are behaving reasonably. This fallacy was exploded by the action of Bell, London and Provincial Properties Ltd., among others, who served eviction notices on over 400 tenants at once in Mr. Brooke's constituency.

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Fallacy number three is that the Rent Act will result in a lot more accommodation to let coming onto the market. The major prophets (including Mr. Brooke) have long been promising that this miracle would take place. The sands are running out, and we are still waiting for the miracle. A minor prophet, Mr. Graham Page, M.P., secretary of the Conservative Parliamentary Housing Committee, is however determined to bring about this miracle somehow; he urges that local councils should evict all council tenants who can afford to buy a house, in order to offer the vacant accommodation to hardship cases next October. 'This is the solution to the Rent Act hardship cases', he says (*Observer*, March 9). Is there no limit to Tory effrontery?

There is only one solution to Rent Act hardship and that is the repeal of the Rent Act.

WILLIAM MORRIS ON WILLIAM BLAKE

William Blake was almost the first, if not the first, of those poets who drew English poetry from the slough of conventional twaddle in which the 18th century had sunk it; and visionary as he was, he was able to look at realities, and to make his words mean something; whereas it was an understood condition of the so-called 'poetry' of the 18th century that they should mean nothing.

(William Morris, *Commonweal*, February 5, 1887.)

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NORTH AFRICA SHAKES FRANCE

Desmond Buckle

ABOUT two months before the barbarous and brutal bombing and strafing of the Tunisian border village of Sakiet Sidi Youssef, French Government officials were boasting that the rebellion in Algeria was 'militarily at an end' and that the policy of 'pacification' had been an unqualified success. At about the same time the French Foreign Minister, M. Christian Pineau, solemnly declared to the United Nations that 'practically all over Algeria, life has returned to normal'.

However, towards the end of January it had to be admitted that the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) was still capable of launching heavy attacks against the huge French army of occupation. On January 11 there had been an ambush near Sakiet in which the French lost fifteen killed and four prisoners to a nationalist force. The French Government reacted to this incident by breaking off negotiations then being held with the Tunisian Government on future relations between the two countries. Right-wing deputies in Paris urged the Government to take military action against the Tunisians and the colonialists in Algeria demanded the evacuation of a zone fifty kilometres broad in Tunisia near its frontier with Algeria. In this zone the French troops were to be instructed to bombard indiscriminately all convoys, camps, depots and concentrations of men.

The French have always claimed that the war in Algeria would have been over long ago but for the help rendered to the nationalists from Tunisia. So for several months they have maintained constant aerial patrols along the Algerian-Tunisian frontier. On the ground the French army has built the 'Morice Line', a 150-mile long electrified barbed-wire fence along the railway from Bone in the north to Tebessa in the south. For operating among the rocky hills, impenetrable woods and thick scrub of the no-man's-land between the 'Morice Line 'and the actual frontier, is a specially trained nationalist commando force equipped with insulated wire cutters. This force creates many diversions drawing the French troops away from the main break-through area.

In early February, FLN ambushes and raids became more frequent and more daring resulting in the course of a few days in some 100 French casualties. Even the heavily guarded railway

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line between the new Saharan oilfields and the port of Philippeville, more than fifty miles westward of the 'Morice Line', was blown up twice in ten days. French army commanders admitted that the FLN was 'incomparably better armed' than a year ago. As an indication of growing nationalist strength *France-Soir*, quoting official sources, said that while twenty-seven French planes had been hit by ground fire in November the number had risen to forty in December and seventy in January. It was also estimated that the nationalist army had grown from 25,000 to 30,000. (Some sources put it even as high as 70,000.)

Stung by the realisation that it was as far off as ever from winning the war—and winning it had become imperative if only as a 'face-saver' for the French army—the Gaillard Government completely lost its head. And the result was the bombing of Sakiet which for inhuman savagery rivalled the fascist bombing of the little Basque town of Guernica during the Spanish civil war.

As at Guernica it was market day in Sakiet and the streets were crowded with peasants and their children. As if to make sure they obtained the highest possible number of victims the planes attacked just before noon when the crowds were at their densest. Of the twenty-five planes taking part in the raid, seventeen were U.S.-made fighters and light bombers. This fact was not lost on the survivors. Cried one of them: 'They did it with American planes, bombs and bullets!' Unable to deny that the French had used planes supplied to them by the Americans, U.S. Senators, Congressmen and others have been at pains to explain that the planes used had been obtained by the French through a straight commercial deal and not through the NATO agreement.

In Paris, Prime Minister Gaillard refused to recognise his Government's culpability and at first insisted that the majority of the victims were soldiers of the FLN. On the other hand, Foreign Minister Christian Pineau, evidently dismayed by the attack and the effect it would have on the French cause in North Africa, went so far as to allow himself, in an interview with the *New York Herald Tribune's* Joseph Alsop, to describe the bombing as 'a sad error'. Pineau later claimed that a few imprudent words uttered off the record had been 'distorted'. Under sharp examination before the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, Pineau finally admitted that neither he, nor the Cabinet nor M. Robert Lacoste, Minister Resident in Algeria, had known previously of the decision to attack Sakiet. The order to bomb the village which had resulted in world wide obloquy for France had in fact been given by a local

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commander acting on vague instructions authorising retaliatory measures in the event of raids in the immediate frontier areas.

The Sakiet bombing not only exposed France's 'civilising mission' claims in Algeria: it put President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia in an untenable position. He hastened to make an offer to accept U.S. mediation which could hardly have pleased the French. For during the course of the Algerian war the French have resisted any attempt to 'internationalise' the problem. To the monotonous refrain, 'L'Algerie, c'est la France' they have striven to keep Britain and the U.S. in particular from taking too close an interest in what they regard as a legitimate French sphere of interest. In the U.S. the Sakiet bombing was held to have blown sky-high all France's objections about 'meddling' in her affairs in North Africa. The *Christian Science Monitor* wrote that though France may object to international interference in the Algerian problem this 'does not exclude *all* (my emphasis—D.B.) international help in solving it'.

Gaillard was forced to match Bourguiba's offer by announcing his Government's willingness to accept 'the good offices' of the U.S. and Britain in settling the dispute between France and Tunisia. French officials quickly explained that 'good offices' did not mean mediation and still less arbitration. In their view all that was intended was help in bringing the disputing parties together. And, of course, nothing was to be said about Algeria; only Sakiet and the problem of French troops in Tunisia and their movements within that country. The future of Bizerta, the large naval base, could also be discussed although the French Government made it clear from the beginning that it had no intention of giving it up. Pineau declared that the only concessions France was prepared to make were those that served her self-interest, such as the proposal to set up a Franco-Tunisian commission to control the frontier.

The decision of the Americans to undertake the 'good offices' effort was received with delight by Bourguiba. He quickly agreed to postpone the Security Council debate which he had asked for. The debate was to have dealt not only with the immediate issue of Sakiet but also with the whole question of French conduct in North Africa. The French themselves had lodged a counter complaint with the Security Council accusing Tunisia of permitting the Algerian nationalists to launch attacks from Tunisian soil. However much the French Government tried to keep Algeria out of the dispute it kept on intruding. After all, Sakiet was only an issue arising out of a very much larger problem and that problem was Algeria. The French, notably M. Chaban Delmas, the Minister of

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Defence, claim that there would be no Algerian problem but for Tunisian support of the insurgents. Yet they want no reference to Algeria in settling their dispute with Tunisia!

Bourguiba in fact saved France's face and her allies much embarrassment by postponing the Security Council debate. Having won this respite, the western allies lost no time in getting on with their 'good offices' effort. However, the choice of Robert Murphy to represent the U.S. State Department caused dismay in Paris. *Le Monde* and *Le Parisien* recalled Murphy's war-time antipathy towards Free France and his attempts to prevent Free French forces from liberating French territory. *Le Monde*, however, found some comfort in the fact that Murphy could not be said to have any particular sympathy for Bourguiba and the FLN either. It is difficult to say who is the more angry with the other: Bourguiba with the French or the French with Bourguiba. Making the best of a bad situation the French Government has tentatively suggested the establishment of a Western Mediterranean defence pact and a Franco-North African economic union for the development of the Sahara. It is said that the original idea was hatched in the fertile brain of Mr. Dulles; but the French Government modified it with the implication that Algeria's participation should be only as a part of France. Algeria, said M. Gaillard in referring to his plan in a speech in Chartres, is the umbilical cord between France and Africa and if it were lost the Republican régime in France would 'die of shock'. In a pointed reference to M. Bourguiba, M. Gaillard said: 'We shall see by their reply if certain chiefs-of-state, who loudly proclaim their attachment to the West do so in a spirit of blackmail, or from personal conviction'.

Yet Bourguiba's attachment to the West is real. Only a couple of days before the Sakiet incident he warned France in a broadcast to settle the Algerian problem quickly, since the recently established Syrian-Egyptian union might prove an irresistible attraction for the Arabs of North Africa. He said:

> If the Algerian people, despairing of the West, begin to slide down the attractive slope which has already drawn onwards the peoples already disappointed by the West and now counting instead on Russia, there is a chance of all Africa following the movement.

On innumerable occasions Bourguiba has declared his devotion to the West and his hostility towards the Soviet Union, Nasser's Egypt and towards anyone opposed to the West. He curbed the power of his Minister of the Interior, Taieb Mehri, because he was 'too

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anti-French' and he dismissed the Minister of Youth and Sports, Azouz Rebai, accusing him of using his position to stir up anti-French sentiments among the Tunisian youth.

When the FLN established an office in Tunis, Bourguiba regarded it as an excellent opportunity for him to wean the Algerian movement away from the Liberation Committee of the Arab Maghreb in Cairo and from Nasser's influence. At the same time, by keeping up supplies to the nationalist army in Algeria, he would be carrying out the wishes of the Tunisian people and, indeed, of all North African Arabs. Bourguiba has never made any secret of the help he has been giving to the Algerian nationalists; but he has, not without reason, expected the French Government to understand his position. 'Why shouldn't we help them? We are not at war with Algeria. And if we did not help them they would look for help in Cairo or Prague', says a Tunisian official admitting that Algerian nationalist troops enter Tunisian territory for medical treatment and recuperation.

In France itself on top of the nation-wide shock consequent upon the Sakiet incident came the publication of M. Henri Alleg's book, *La Question*, in which he gives a detailed account of tortures he suffered at the hands of French parachutists after they had arrested him in Algiers last June. Even right-wing journals have not been able to keep silent before the national wave of indignation at what *Le Monde* describes as 'a debasement of spirit unworthy of men who wear the French uniform'. Alleg, a European Algerian, was formerly editor of the progressive *Alger Republicain* which was suppressed by the authorities in Algeria. One of his torturers told him: 'We'll do what we're doing here in France, too'. In that phrase even the densest Frenchman can see what the people of France owe in solidarity with the Algerian people. The demand in France for the ending of this unjust war which is bringing yet more international opprobrium to France is being made with ever greater insistence. A few days after the Sakiet incident a new campaign for ending the Algerian war was launched in an appeal signed by one hundred and eleven national figures in all walks of life. The great demonstration at the funeral of Marcel Cachin was not only in personal homage to a great working class leader. It was also an expression of support for the aims for which throughout his life he fought with unrelenting vigour. The right of the colonial people to self-determination was among these aims.

Bombs on Sakiet Sidi Youssef have blown away much of the apathy on the Seine.

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LIFE SEEN AT NINETY

W. E. B. DuBOIS

Born February 23, 1868, the famous scholar and fighter for Negro rights, wrote this for his 90th birthday.*

This is the month of my 90th birthday, I have lived to an age which is increasingly distasteful to this nation. Unless by 60 a man has gained possession of enough to support himself without paid employment, he faces the distinct possibility of starvation. He is liable to lose his job and to refusal if he seeks another. At 70 he is frowned upon by the Church and if he is foolish enough to survive until 90, he is often regarded as a freak. This is because in the face of human experience the United States has discovered that Youth knows more than Age. When a man of 35 becomes president of a great institution of learning or United States Senator or head of a multi-million dollar corporation, a cry of triumph rings in the land. Why? To pretend that 15 years bring of themselves more wisdom and understanding than 50 is a contradiction in terms.

Given a fool, a hundred years will not make him wise; but given an idiot, he will not be wise at 20. Youth is more courageous than age because it knows less. Age is wiser than youth because it knows more. This all mankind has affirmed from Egypt and China 5,000 years ago to Britain and Germany today. The United States knows better. I would have been hailed with approval if I had died at 50. At 75 my death was practically requested. If living does not give value, wisdom and meaning to life, then there is no sense in living at all. If immature and inexperienced men rule the earth, then the earth deserves what it gets: the repetition of age-old mistakes, and wild welcome for what men knew a thousand years ago was disaster. I do not apologise for living long. High on the ramparts of this blistering hell of life, I sit and see the Truth. I look it full in the face, and I will not lie about it, neither to myself nor to the world. I see my country as what Cedric Belfrage aptly characterises as a 'Frightened Giant', afraid of the Truth, afraid of Peace. I see a land which is degenerating and faces decadence, unless it has sense enough to turn about and start back.

It is no sin to fail. It is the habit of man. It is disaster to go on when you know you are going wrong. I judge this land not merely

*Published in the *National Guardian*, February 17, 1958.

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by statistics or reading lies agreed upon by historians. I judge by what I have seen, heard and lived through for near a century. There was a day when the world rightly called Americans honest even if crude; earning their living by hard work; telling the truth no matter whom it hurt; and going to war only in what they believed a just cause after nothing else seemed possible. Today we are lying, stealing and killing. We call all this by finer names: Advertising, Free Enterprise, and National Defence. But names in the end deceive no one; today we use science to help us deceive our fellows; we take wealth that we never earned and we are devoting all our energies to kill, maim, and drive insane, men, women and children who dare refuse to do what we want done.

No nation threatens us. We threaten the world. Our President says that Foster Dulles is the wisest man he knows. If Dulles is wise, God help our fools—the fools who rule us. They know why we fail—these military masters of men—we haven't taught our children mathematics and physics. No, it is because we have not taught our children to read and write or to behave like human beings and not like hoodlums. . . .

Criticism is treason, and treason or the hint of treason testified to by hired liars may be punished by shameful death. I saw Ethel Rosenberg lying beautiful in her coffin beside her mate. I tried to stammer futile words above her grave. But not over graves should we shout this failure of justice, but from the housetops of the world. Honest men may and must criticise America: describe how she has ruined her democracy, sold out her jury system, and led her seats of justice astray. The only question that may arise is whether this criticism is based on truth, not whether it may be openly expressed. What is truth? What can it be when the President of the United States, guiding the nation, stands up in public and says: '*The world also thinks of us as a land which has never enslaved anyone*'.

Everyone who heard this knew it was not true. Yet here stands the successor of George Washington who bought, owned, and sold slaves; the successor of Abraham Lincoln who freed four million slaves after they had helped him win victory over the slave-holding South. And so far as I have seen, not a single periodical, not even a Negro weekly, has dared challenge or even criticise that extraordinary falsehood. This is what I call decadence. It could not have happened 50 years ago. In the day of our fiercest controversy we have not dared thus publicly to silence opinion. I have lived through disagreement, vilification, and war and war again. But in all that time, I have never seen the right of human beings to

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think so challenged and denied as today. The day after I was born, Andrew Johnson was impeached. He deserved punishment as a traitor to the poor Southern whites and poorer freedmen. Yet during his life, no one denied him the right to defend himself. A half-century ago, in 1910, I tried to state and carry into realisation unpopular ideas against a powerful opposition—in the white South, in the reactionary North, and even among my own people. I found my thought being misconstrued and I planned an organ of propaganda—*The Crisis*—where I would be free to say what I believed.

This was no easy sailing. My magazine reached but a fraction of the nation. It was bitterly attacked and once the government suppressed it. But in the end I maintained a platform of radical thinking on the Negro question which influenced many minds. War and depression ended my independence of thought and forced me to return to teaching, but with the certainty that I had at least started a new line of belief and action.

As a result of my work and that of others, the Supreme Court began to restore democracy in the South and finally outlawed discrimination in public services based on colour. This caused rebellion in the South which the nation is afraid to meet. The Negro stands bewildered and attempt is made by appointments to unimportant offices and trips abroad to bribe him into silence. His art and literature cease to function. He is scared. Only the children like those at Little Rock stand and fight. The Yale Sophomore who replaced a periodical of brains by a book of pictures concealed in advertisements, proposed that America rule the world. This failed because we could not rule ourselves. But Texas to the rescue, as Lyndon Johnson proposes that America take over outer space. Somewhere beyond the moon there must be sentient creatures rolling in inextinguishable laughter at the antics of our earth. We tax ourselves into poverty and crime so as to make the rich richer and bring more crime and poverty. We know the cause of this: it is to permit our rich business interests to stop socialism and to prevent the ideals of communism from ever triumphing on earth. The aim is impossible.

Socialism progresses and will progress. All we can do is to silence and jail its promoters. I believe in socialism, I seek a world where the ideals of communism will triumph—to each according to his need; from each according to his ability. For this I will work as long as I live. And I still live.

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SLITHERING TO RUIN Part 2.

HUGO RATHBONE

[*A City columnist of* The Times *on February 21 quoted a* Westminster Bank Review *article summarising the repercussions of the credit squeeze which 'have seriously embarrassed the other members of the sterling area'; and then added the brutal comment 'It is as well to remember that this "embarrassment" was one of the objects of that monetary policy'. Quite so! And Hugo Rathbone, who had anticipated this in his March article (notably in his conclusion 'Commonwealth in Queer Street') now develops the subject further. —Ed., L.M.*]

THE all-consuming desire of capitalism to keep control of the capital that it exports was recently reflected on the international field by a great jamboree of the heads of some of the more famous monopolies of the 'Western' world. Heads were there from I.C.I., Courtaulds, Morgan Grenfell and British Aircraft Constructors from Britain; Fords and the Rockefeller interests from the U.S. and Krupp from Germany with their like counterparts from France, Belgium, etc. The jamboree was organised by *Time-Life International* and the Stanford Research Institute and was held last October in San Francisco under the title of 'International Industrial Development Conference'. Its announced purpose was to hold a discussion between these business men and the economic planners of 60 nations on the subject of 'the role of free enterprise in industrial growth and investment especially of new nations' (*Observer*, October 20, 1957). Five hundred were present but the industrialists and bankers outnumbered the planners by 15 to 1 and the principal clash at the Conference, so it was said, occurred between these two groups. Eugene Black, President of the World Bank, demanded 'an end to resentment of the profit motive'. A German banker soundly berated the capital exporting nations for their weakness in giving in to such 'outrages' as the nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. by Iran and the Suez Canal Co. by Egypt. He called for the creation of 'an international system of protection of private investments abroad'. Vice-President Nixon, who had graced this gathering with his presence, readily responded. After detailing a series of legislative actions the U.S. should take to encourage foreign investment (it was at this Conference that he had

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called for a doubling if not a trebling of U.S. investment abroad, referred to in the first part of this article last month), Nixon called for

> efforts through the World Bank to set up a 'privately operated guarantee fund' as a protection against expropriation and devaluation.
>
> (*Financial Times*, October 16, 1957.)

The lack of enthusiasm from Western countries, as shown in the United Nations, for schemes to provide funds on specially favourable terms for the development of underdeveloped countries was recently highlighted by the news that Western Germany had shown no eagerness to develop its long-term capital investment abroad. As *The Times* (December 30, 1957) said, the reason 'may well be the absence of any undeveloped territories over which they can claim special influence'. It has long been a grievance in financial circles in Britain that the U.S. through its control of the World Bank has directed most of its loans to South America where its 'special influence' is too well known to need further comment. Surely also it is obvious that the military strings the U.S. has always attached to almost all its other loans is due to this same desire to ensure its 'special influence' in such countries?

It is clear from this that today as formerly the retention of control over capital exported is regarded as absolutely essential by the exporting nation. The whole history of British capitalism's export of its capital proves this and its growing military expenditure overseas employed to retain this control in face especially of the growth of the national revolutionary movement in the colonies serves to clinch the argument.

Traditionally capital exported was in the form of loans for railway, harbour and other such development which would open up the colony to British manufactured goods. Today with the rapid process of change from former colonies to politically independent Dominions, the demand from these countries is really for equipment—capital goods to extend their industries—rather than for the finished goods that British industry was normally geared to supply. Besides, the capital goods produced in Britain still tend to become absorbed by the re-equipment needs of British industry. Hence the big unsatisfied demand for capital in other sterling countries: hence, too, the doubts voiced here as to whether capital export is as vital as it was. The Tory Government, however, has no doubts on this point; nor have big industrial monopolies, nor most of the big banks.

For not only is the expansion of capital export an essential characteristic of an imperialist economy but (as Lenin long ago

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showed in his book *Imperialism*) the growing importance of the tribute from this capital export leads to the parasitic decay of the whole economy. Ever larger proportions of the population either themselves directly receive this tribute or cater for the needs and luxuries of these drones. A modern extreme picture of this tendency is unconsciously revealed by a City columnist, called 'Lombard'. He was combating the view that capital export 'was a game not worth the candle', as he put it.

> Any such stoppage would interfere with the long-term policy of strengthening invisible income* against the day when industrialisation overseas has proceeded so far that it becomes difficult to cover import needs from the proceeds of merchandise exports.
>
> (*Financial Times*, December 2, 1957.)

A pretty picture, isn't it, of a fully parasitic Britain depending almost entirely on the tribute it receives from overseas investment? This crude but logical extension of what Lenin foreshadowed more than 40 years ago should nevertheless be examined to see how far it has gone.

Total Capital Exports

It first must be stated that, in spite of Britain's slithering, in Thorneycroft's own words, from one crisis to another since the war, the export of capital has continued. This has been done first by utilising the loans from the U.S. Secondly, by juggling with the colonial sterling balances. These, as we have already mentioned, were profits filched from small primary producers in the colonies. With the credit provided by these balances, large sums of capital have been exported back to these countries, resulting, of course, in an increase in the level of tribute borne by their peoples. All this has been fully shown in R. P. Dutt's *The Crisis of Britain and the British Empire*. In effect this process of using borrowed money to maintain the level of capital export was admitted by F. W. Paish, Economics Professor at the London School of Economics, in a detailed study of 'Britain's Foreign Investments' (*Lloyds Bank Review*, July, 1956). Paish's conclusion was that Britain's pre-war position of owning some £4,000 millions of net assets had, when he wrote, been converted into a deficit of 'perhaps a £1,000 million or more'.†

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*i.e., the tribute from capital export.

†Not only had Britain mortgaged the whole of its assets overseas but it had put itself in the red to the extent of a further £1,000 million without anything left to it overseas to realise should its creditors foreclose. Truly a potentially bankrupt position. This situation, since Paish wrote in 1956, has undoubtedly worsened as a result of the debacle of the Suez invasion and the flight from the pound last year when Britain had to go cap in hand to the United States for still further loans.

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These investments today are reckoned to be some £4,000 millions. £645 millions is the official figure of the amount drawn from overseas in tribute on these investments and in other ways from the great banking, insurance and merchanting apparatus built up around them overseas and in the financing and insurance, etc., overseas of the foreign trade of British capitalism. Then there are the net shipping receipts from freights, etc., owned by British-owned shipping coming to another £115 millions. Thirdly, there are the earnings the City rakes in, here in Britain, from its merchanting, insurance, banking, etc., operations connected with foreign trade which have variously been estimated between £125 and £150 millions. All this amounts to some £885-£910 millions. Finally, to this should be added a further sum in the form of extra profits that British capitalist industry because of its higher technique makes from its foreign trade with the more backward countries with their lower level of technique. The total of this extra or super profit is difficult to calculate but it must amount to a very considerable sum indeed. So we reach a total of *close on £1,000,000,000*—ultimately accruing in 1956 to the profit of the holders of shares and bonds in companies, or as partners in business concerns, or as holders of government or other public loans dealing with the overseas interests of British economy today. This is in fact some measure of the yearly rate of exploitation of peoples overseas by British capitalism to-day—almost £1,000,000,000.

So 'the path to greatness' and not to ruin as Thorneycroft put it, and with which the Government basically agrees, is to increase the reserves to keep the value of the pound stable and also to increase still further the export of capital. This is expected to have totalled £200 million or more in 1957. The aim is to double it—to £400 million at least. The 7% Bank rate and the credit squeeze may have the effect of increasing the reserve, but it is reducing production and so making the export of capital more difficult especially in the form of the capital goods that overseas countries particularly desire. In any case this export of capital is only being done by increasing the load of British debt to the United States. This increase in debt in turn will upset the balance of payments again, already becoming more difficult to balance owing to increasing private investment from America both here and in every other sterling country.

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Results—Increasing Poverty

And the cost. Not only is this policy upsetting the financial stability of the Dominions leading to increased exploitation of their peoples in the interests of the British holders of their resources but the colonial countries will be even more affected. A significant leader in *The Times* (January 1, 1958), spoke of the need by the West for a new leadership from the United States; Eisenhower and Dulles may be faced with another 'agonising reappraisal'. For *'with poverty in the under-developed countries increasing,* or at best development slowing down, any failure to help them at a time when Russian offers, however specious, are open-handed will leave the United States with a lower repute in the international psychological battle'. (Our emphasis, H.R.)

So *The Times* itself admits that the peoples of the under-developed countries—generally the colonial or ex-colonial lands—are still so near the poverty line that even with the present decline in the price of the raw materials they produce their very existence is threatened. And this after decades if not centuries of the self-styled beneficent rule by the great powers. Such indeed is the reality of their exploitation—hovering on the border line of poverty, and the gap between their backwardness and the ever higher technical level of the industry of the great powers merely going to increase the profit of the holders of the capital which is exported to them.

The 'absolute poverty' of the colonial peoples, referred to by R.P.D. in his December *Notes* last year (p. 536) on 'Economics and Politics of Increasing Misery' has, as he stated, been found by repeated United Nations Surveys to have increased since the second world war. All this has been accompanied by boom conditions, especially in both Britain and the United States, with unprecedented records in profits of the companies and combines of those countries which are particularly concerned in direct colonial exploitation. To fight this exploitation it is no wonder that their national revolutionary movement is going from strength to strength.

CORRECTION: By an unfortunate error in the Table of Contents in the March issue, in which the first part of the above article appeared, the surname Bellamy appeared as author instead of Rathbone, to whom a book review was attributed.

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LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM

MOVED *by the deadly quotations from statesmen and churchmen on the subject of Peace and War which 'Joker' contributed last month, another card in the pack, 'Deuce', this time provides nearly a score of quotations from Tory M.P.s He (or she) entitled these* 'TIS THE VOICE OF THE TORY. *In addition, another correspondent complains of the 'ruling class propaganda blast' and calls for the working man to educate himself; we hear from an American correspondent about events in the South; a young worker answers the young clerk; Welsh readers greet Paul Robeson's sixtieth birthday; and there is yet another letter on Zionism. Letters intended for May should reach us by Monday, April 20. Short letters, please! Address them to The Editor, Labour Discussion Forum, 134, Ballards Lane, London, N.3.*

'Tis the Voice of the Tory

'Joker' did a service when he cast the 'Pearls of Peace' of our elders before us last month. This moves me to offer some companions from the same sty—all Tory M.Ps. to a man.

Hand the Gent a Cigar! A party of great vested interests, banded together in a formidable confederation; corruption at home, aggression to cover it abroad; the trickery of the tariff juggles; the tyranny of a well-fed party machine; sentiment by the bucketful; patriotism and imperialism by the imperial pint. (Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, M.P., describing the Conservative Party, when he was temporarily a Liberal, May 8, 1908.)

And Another Bull's Eye! The party of the rich against the poor. (The same, on the same subject, January 30, 1909.)

Waving the Old School Tie. When the call came to me to form a Government, one of my first thoughts was that it should be a Government of which Harrow should not be ashamed. (Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, M.P.)

Speaking of Parasites. . . . The money . . . is distributed in doles to those who have no objection to becoming parasites and breed like rabbits because they do not care what becomes of their children. (Austen Hopkinson, M.P., 1923.)

Vote-Catching? I would take the vote from those who had been in receipt of the dole for more than a fixed number of weeks in any year, restoring it when the recipient had been in steady employment again for a fixed number of weeks. (Maurice Hely-Hutchinson, M.P., *Capitalism?* 1933.)

And Skilled in his Trade. Finance is my trade. I have learned that it is the Mother of all business; whose Father is the desire for Profit. (The same, same book, same date.)

Blimp on India. India is not ready for democracy; the ordinary Indian voter has as much civic sense as a child of six. (Major-General Sir Alfred Knox, M.P., veteran of the wars of intervention against the young Soviet Republic, November 3, 1934.)

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Whose Side Was He On? If another war comes—Well, I must not say what I was going to say—I hope the partners will be changed. (Lord Mount Temple, July, 19, 1936.)

Peace of the Grave. I have met Hitler repeatedly. I believe him to be a great instrument of peace in the world. (Sir Arnold Wilson, M.P., October 9, 1936.)

Still at it? We cannot afford to pursue any policy which would bring us into conflict with Germany, Italy and Japan. We should therefore avoid any step which tied us closely to Russia. (Rt. Hon. L. C. M. S. Amery, M.P., July 19, 1937.)

And Who is 'We'? I believe we are very foolish in this House sometimes, those of us who refuse to believe that there is any good in National-Socialism, or that there is no unselfishness in men like Hitler and Goering. (A. Beverley Baxter, M.P., January 26, 1938.)

The Christian Gentleman. I recognise General Franco to be a gallant Christian gentleman and I believe his word. (Sir Henry Page Croft, M.P., March 23, 1938.)

His Leader. General Franco . . . the Leader of our cause today. (Captain Victor Cazalet, M.P., March 23, 1938.)

Butcher Franco the Crusader. General Franco is leading a crusade for all that we in England hold dear. (Alfred Denville, M.P., November 24, 1938.)

Go East, Herr Hitler. Let Herr Hitler expand as far as he can in South-East Europe; we shall still have our share of the trade. (Annesley Somerville, M.P., March 15, 1939.)

Four Months Before. Believe me, there is going to be no war. (Sir Patrick Hannon, M.P., May 16, 1939.)

Four Days Before. War today is not only not inevitable, but is unlikely. The Government have good reason for saying that. (Sir Thomas Inskip, M.P., Cabinet Minister, Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, later Lord Caldecote, August 31, 1939.)

This Was the Phoney War. I can even visualise our troops fighting side by side with the Germans to defeat the Bolshevist menace. (C. T. Culverwell, M.P., November 30, 1939.)

Bellman's Clanger. If we are to go to the people of this country and say 'You have to look forward to a long period of self-sacrifice and restriction', we can do so only if we offer at the same time a complete measure of social justice to guarantee that we shall all suffer alike. (Mr. Quintin Hogg, M.P., now Lord Hailsham, February 17, 1943.)

Some of these are still sitting in Parliament. Government benches are still packed with their like—and worse. Why do we still put up with them?

'DEUCE',
Gloucestershire.

'I Struck, So Dad Was Sacked'

In reply to Des Hannon's letter in the February *Labour Monthly:* I am an organised worker, a bus conductor; my father unorganised, a clerk. My pay is superior. My father works shorter hours, but frequently has to do compulsory overtime, often without payment. I do overtime when I want, at fixed rates. My father gets sick pay on occasions, depending on his employer. I always get payment, thanks to the sick pay scheme devised by the union. Then, Factory Acts which lay down minimum conditions for places of work do not apply to offices.

My father has been dismissed for his Socialist beliefs and actions for

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his fellow workers; but the force of my union prevents the same happening to me. A few years ago we were both employed by the same firm, my father in the office and I as a labourer. He was sacked for my going on strike.

So, Des Hannon, union organisation *does* pay.

NEIL GORDON,
Stevenage.

Education v. Propaganda

If ever there was a time when the working man should take pains to educate himself, it is today. From the time he wakes to the time he goes to sleep, it is one long blast to keep him from getting to know the facts and think for himself about them. Press, radio, television—if the programmes are not direct lies, misinformation or one-sided slanting of news, then they are pop songs and plugging, or boring comics who would not have lasted five minutes in a variety theatre when I was a young man. In the big cities public libraries are available, and usually the supply of technical books is good; but a glance at the Politics, Philosophy and Religion sections shows how low these have sunk.

Blanqui wrote: 'Ignorance and Communism are incompatible'. Today we could truly say what John Maclean told his students in 1913: 'The millennium, if it is to come, must come from an educated working class. Today you can be swayed by speeches and pamphlets. But the person who has studied Marx and has applied him to literature, to life in all its phases, can see things as they are.' If more people who attend Evening Classes were to take those words to heart, and challenge every anti-working class remark and innuendo that is made there, it would at least make members of those classes think. At present these classes are often little better than part and parcel of the same old ruling class propaganda blast.

D. S. SMITH,
Bromley.

'Israel Should Be Neutral'

In my letter 'Zionism and Refugees' I pointed out that in the absence of a Socialist Palestine mass immigration was almost certain to bring evictions. Ought the Jews then to have refused to enter the country under these historical conditions? I wrote: 'Dutt gives the impression that they should. *Where then should they have gone? Or doesn't this matter?*' There is no justification in drawing from this very pertinent question the inference that I am indifferent to Arab rights. On the contrary: a neutral Israel, good land and equal rights for her Arabs, a solution to the refugee problem just to both sides—this is my idea of the only way forward.

Yes, Zionism was largely responsible for the riots which caused hundreds of deaths. Zionism also saved hundreds and thousands of lives. Anti-Zionists like to speak only of the first; Zionists of the second. Let us speak of both. This is what I mean by intellectual honesty about Zionism.

A. Winter is unwise to exonerate the European working class of any responsibility for the crimes of reactionary governments on the grounds that anti-semitism is a class weapon. Logically he must now go on to absolve British and Israeli workers alike of any responsibility for colonialism and racism since race contempt is also a class weapon: an ideal excuse for passivity. Those of us who marched to Ruislip knew different. We knew that, whatever the extenuating circumstances, indi-

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vidual and national responsibility do in fact exist. To deny this is to deny our own humanity.

VERA GREY,
Enfield.

Subversion Down South

In case you in England fancy that now at least the Un-American Congressional Committees will have quietly to drop their Un-American activities, let me hasten to put you wise. Results of four-days' hearings lately announced show where to look for trouble-makers—and it is not in the moon. At least five of the 'un-co-operative witnesses' who have claimed their constitutional rights under the First and Fifth Amendments were young women connected with the Y.W.C.A. or other social services. Then another—and here we come to it—has served as president of the local National Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples. But above all there were the disclosures about the Highlander Folk School at Monteagle, Tennessee. (It is an unsegregated school, training students for labour and farmers' organisations. and students desiring to assist in school integration in the South. I attended a week's course for farmers there some years ago.) Naturally, it had been investigated for possible 'subversive' teachings. Now—to warm our hearts—we find it has had as students such inspiring figures as Rosa Sparks, whose action first started off the successful Montgomery bus boycott; the Rev. Martin Luther, who led the boycott; David K. Brooks, Leader of the Tallahassee bus boycott; Dr. Charles G. Gomillion, who led the Tuskegee merchant's boycott; Allen McSurain, initiator of school integration at Clinton, Tennessee. (What a splendid drawing on that subject by Leo Haas, 'Life's School', you printed some year ago in *Labour Monthly*!) And it was at this same Monteagle that Billy Graham's pet billy goat went and butted him fifty feet down a rocky ledge, sending him to bed with a broken ankle. Seemingly, the climate must favour subversive characters.

B.B.K.,
Florida.

Happy Birthday to Robeson!

Last year there was a very moving moment at the Miners' Eisteddfod in Porthcawl. This was when the audience heard the voice of Paul Robeson speaking and singing to us from two thousand miles away across the Atlantic Ocean. Although the United States Government could keep his passport from him, they could not stop us hearing his voice by transatlantic telephone link-up. I am sure that everyone who experienced that great occasion would like to know that he will be celebrating his sixtieth birthday on April 9. My wife and I are sending our greetings to him addressed to the American Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London W.1., marked: 'Please forward to the great American singer and fighter for freedom.'

G. WILLIAMS,
Glamorganshire.

'Reducing the Hours . . .'

Recently I was told an old jingle, which seems to fit the situation today. It goes like this:

Whether you work by the piece
Or work by the day,
Reducing the Hours
Increases the Pay.

Can you tell me where it comes from and when it was first used?

C. BARRY,
Yorkshire.

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BOOKS

On Religion
K. Marx and F. Engels.
Lawrence & Wishart, 1958.
380 pp. 4s.

THERE are many whose only knowledge of Marx's writings on religion is the famous aphorism 'religion is the opium of the people', and that is often mistakenly ascribed to Lenin. But throughout their lives Marx and Engels fought for an objective, materialist outlook on the world, which necessitated an analysis of the origins of religion, its role in class society and, particularly, the part played by religion and religious propaganda in capitalist society. This is abundantly evident from this valuable collection of excerpts, which range from Marx's preface to his first doctoral thesis of 1841 to one of Engels's last articles (on the history of early Christianity) published in 1894. Nor are these mere fragments, but considerable passages or whole articles. Much of this material has already appeared in English, being extracts from fundamental theoretical works. But, apart from the advantage of having these classical expositions of the Marxist materialist outlook collected in a handy form, the volume contains a number of extracts or whole articles hitherto unavailable in English. They include several early writings of Marx and Engels, an interesting example of which is the polemical article by Marx in the *Rheinische Zeitung* in which he examines the charge that his newspaper was subversive of religion and ought to be censored. Valuable also are Engels's studies of the Bible and early Christianity. Here, too, he has his word to say about what Judaism contributed to Christianity, a subject which the 'Dead Sea Scrolls' has brought into renewed prominence.

C. P. DUTT.

Tram-Stop by the Nile.
Dave Wallis.
Heinemann.
242 pp. 15s.

THOSE who were in Egypt and the Western Desert during the war and those who have read his poems and short stories since, will especially welcome Dave Wallis' first novel. Opening in the dark days of the Alamein retreat, it creates a vividly true impression of the confused and contradictory objectives of people of different nationalities thrown together in the anti-fascist struggle—from the reluctant co-operation of Egyptian progressives with their hated enemy, Britain, to the guarded use of refugee German and Italian communists by British Intelligence. And as the common danger passes we see the new alignments taking form to meet the new situation.

Though useful information about Egypt is revealed as this main theme develops, what holds the reader's interest to the end is the characters themselves. From the 'Old Man', anxious to preserve his world of privilege, to Hafez the engine driver becoming aware of how things can be, all are real persons, brought to life by keen perception and human understanding combined with a terse but eminently readable style.

The title is a pity.

A.W.

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(Continued from page ii of cover)

soil. The glorious old Yankees have gone to seed and produce nothing but weeds in this generation. Accept this donation to help maintain your Earthwatch. Use it to promote better relations with the Socialist countries'. And from another who writes to explain why he is cancelling his subscription: 'I am 78. Have no work. No means of earning any money. Wages here are high, but living is higher—and no work. None of my friends will take on my subscription, though they should. They feel like they would be capitalists; but they will have something else to think about in the next few years.'

So much for the right to live and to work in the U.S.

If our Space Visitor had come to one or two places in Britain with me last month, I should have had to explain to him why there were queues at the Labour Exchanges on a Friday. Why building workers seek jobs whilst local authorities abandon housing projects and explain that it will be 'out of the question' for them to house a tenth of the tenants expecting eviction under the Rent Act. Why bishops preach sermons reproaching women who go out to earn the increased rent or deposit on house purchase for 'neglecting home and children'. Why aircraft engineers face mass dismissals when civil aviation needs huge expansion. Why government establishments are closed down with the skilled labour force offered no alternative jobs. Why miners watched coal and coke stocks mount whilst American coal was imported at high cost, coal sold to industrialists at artificially cheap prices and old age pensioners shiver before empty grates. Meeting these L.M. readers amongst miners, engineers, railwaymen, builders, clerks, teachers and the women folk would give our Space Visitor a very different picture from that which Mr. Dulles and the British stooges who ape him seek to impose under threat of the H-Bomb. And after he had read John Marshall's annihilation of the Cohen Report in this number, we would perhaps have won another new reader, even if postal rates by Sputnik mail may be high.

Welcome are the number of new fund supporters. From *North-East:* 'Have decided to send 5s. guarantee each month; here's the first.' From *North West:* 'I wouldn't dream of being without this terrific booklet. But though an ardent supporter, I've not yet contributed till now. Here's a donation.' February totalled:

£38 7s. 11d.

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